

# Breakfast Cart II



## How Do Breakfast Carts Work?

Breakfast carts act as mobile serving areas for breakfast. Instead of having the students come to the cafeteria for breakfast, breakfast is brought to where the students are. Reimbursable grab n' go breakfasts work best with a breakfast cart. Breakfasts can be prepackaged; however, some schools offer choices from their breakfast cart. The general rule is the food has to be portable and easy to grab.

Schools typically put their breakfast carts in high traffic areas such as the main entrance, hallway, outside the front door, or near the gymnasium. Wherever the students hang out is where the cart is located. Carts usually have a computer or POS machine. They are filled with breakfast items, including milk in the cafeteria and then taken to the location outside the cafeteria. A food service staff operates the cart before school, during morning break, or between classes, depending on the school.

Carts can be purchased for a reasonable cost and milk coolers are available from the Milk Marketing Board. There is almost no other added cost or time for the food service staff to assemble and serve breakfast. Students are responsible for their trash and following school rules as to where and when they can eat their breakfast.

## Why Use Breakfast Carts?

Most importantly, when you use a breakfast cart, more students eat breakfast. Many middle and high school students would rather hang out with friends than eat breakfast. Schools find that by bringing breakfast to the students, more students eat breakfast because they do not need to leave their friends to get breakfast. Breakfast carts mean that students do not

need to choose between socializing and eating breakfast. Breakfasts served from a cart are convenient for food service staff and take less time to prepare than traditional breakfasts. Because breakfasts are grab n' go, breakfast carts allow schools to serve breakfast quickly to more students.

## When Does Using a Breakfast Cart Work Best?

Using a breakfast cart works particularly well in middle and high schools, but it has also been successful in elementary schools. Here are some other qualities where using a breakfast cart is likely to be particularly successful:

- The cafeteria is located apart from where students hang out.
- Janitors are supportive of serving breakfast at school.
- The breakfast menu can easily be made into grab n' go breakfasts.
- There is one main area of the school where students tend to gather.

The cafeteria tends to be congested or is too small to serve breakfast.

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### Success Story:

<b>School:</b>	Chaseburg School
<b>School District:</b>	Westby <b>Area</b> School District
<b>Contact:</b>	Marilyn Volden, Food Service Director voldemar@westby.k12.wi.us 608-634-0180
<b>Principal:</b>	Clarice Nestingen
<b>Grades served:</b>	3-6
<b>Enrollment:</b>	119
<b>Breakfast participation:</b>	45%
<b>Lunch participation:</b>	78%
<b>Free/Reduced:</b>	18%

**Beginning the 2003-04 school year** Chaseburg School was undergoing a number of changes. They were switching from a middle school to grades 3-6 and they were also switching to a satellite kitchen. After surveying the students, Marilyn Volden, Food Service Director, and the school staff determined that a Grab n' Go breakfast from a breakfast cart was the best solution to ensure the school was able to serve the students breakfast.

Each morning, students can stop by the main office, either before school or after first class and grab a breakfast, milk and juice, from a cart administered by the secretary. Students have a range of choices each day that are all prepackaged in see-through bags so students can tell what the items are. Options include cereal, bagels, pretzels, muffins, **snack crackers** and granola bars. Students can choose just a milk or a full breakfast that they can eat in their classrooms or in the hallway. Because the school already had a milk break,

transitioning to a full breakfast did not require any scheduling changes.

Because of Chaseburg's distance from other schools, it is difficult to have kitchen staff come out to serve breakfast. As a solution, breakfast is prepackaged at a satellite kitchen and is dropped off with milk and juice to the secretary the day before. The secretary puts the milk and juice in the fridge and sets out the bags on the breakfast cart in her office. The next morning when she gets to school, she brings out the cart, milk and juice. Students who want breakfast stop by the main office and the secretary marks down who took breakfast. In total, it only takes the secretary a half hour of additional time to administer the breakfast program.

Response to the program has been positive. There has been no trouble with trash in the hallways or classrooms. Parents are happy with the program because they no longer have to provide morning snacks for their students and student participation has almost tripled! The key to the success of the program, Marilyn says, is the support of the school secretary and principal who promote the program continuously.

The Grab n' Go breakfast from the breakfast cart was so successful at Chaseburg, that plans are underway to buy a larger cart, with **hot and cold holding** capabilities, to put near the front door of the middle school next year.